

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair**  
**April 19, 2016**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting began at 10:15**

**Staff:** Revs. Justin Osterman, Judy Tomlinson

**Members:** Arlene Dodge, Dorothy Sommer, Michael Mernin, Sue Raufer, Chris Corbett, Dottie Hiebing, Judith Rew, Denise Rodgers, Jim Abrams

**Visitors:** COA candidates and mentors: Alan Stoloff, Matt Silverman, Elena Williams, Dionne Ford Kurtti, Lily Seraydarian, Randi Hawkins, Connor Preblich, Ted Hunter, Harrison Naftelberg, Naja John, Johanna Foster, Ed Martoglio; Dennis Kurtti (as candidate for incoming treasurer for next year), Chris Turek (representing the Transition Team)

**Reading/Statement of Guiding Principles**

Judith Rew

Marshall McLuhan on the future and technology

**Check in**

**Adoption of March 2016 Board Meeting minutes:**

Chris moved to adopt / Sue seconded / adopted

**Thank you notes**

Blue Jean Sunday people: John Carlton, Claudia Sanders, Laura Kushner

**President's Report: Mike Mernin**

Circle back and say congratulations to us for getting through the process of creating a search committee.

Justin underlined that: "Good process improves bad ideas; but bad process can derail the best ideas."

**Associate Minister report: Judy Tomlinson**

Introduction to Coming of Agers on why they are here attending a Board meeting.

Registration and recruitment of our RE teaching staff: Somewhat less than halfway through what is needed. My faith is that it will turn out okay but we are behind where we were last year.

Harvest the Power: Had 16 graduates. We are looking for people to recruit into next year's program, holding small information sessions.

Covenant Groups: Justin spoke with Covenant Group leaders. He offered a different model of leadership and described some trends in the wider UU world. Our leaders are seriously considering his ideas.

On Saturday Judy led a memorial service for Steven Bryant's brother.

The Religious Educators Association (LREDA) was our recipient of Sharing Our Riches.

### **Interim Minister's Report: Rev. Justin Osterman**

Justin has been here since August 1 and has tried hard to understand the UUCM's culture. He went on to give a presentation about the UU movement in general in the U.S. in relation to religious communities in general. He presented a picture of what challenges await us and how we might meet them.

In his report Rev. Osterman presented to the Board data on national membership and participation trends in American organized religion (based largely on a 2015 survey by the Pew Research Center), historic membership trends within Unitarian Universalism (1961 to present) and UU Congregation at Montclair (1987 to present). He noted sharp declines in membership within liberal Christian denominations since 1965 and a gradual decline within UU congregations over the same period. He then discussed the Pastoral to Program size transition in congregations, noting in terms of numbers of members and Sunday morning attendance, we are right between a pastoral-sized and program-sized congregation. He emphasized the need for better organization and stronger stewardship at UUCM, and described the demographic profile of UUCM's future leaders. He noted that UUCM needs to increase its membership base and that this will only happen through intentional planning and effort. Discussion ensued. He will make this same report at the Ministerial Transition Team's special Congregational Workshop ("Making the QuantUUm Leap: Remembering, Engaging, Envisioning") on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Some discussion points raised:

--We need to put race diversity on the table; look at where our congregants come from. This adds complexity to what Justin is challenging us with. In 2000-2010 Montclair lost 25% of its African-American population.

--Our mission should strike the spiritual message we want to attract the right people. We need to develop our core strength and the programs will arise from the clarity of who we want to be.

--Worth noting that the only anomaly to downward trends over the last 50 years is the civil rights movement—it was a moment of social revolution and the UU movement benefited. But it didn't last because of internal UU struggles around issues of race, class, privilege.

--We need to look at what other congregations do who have been successful.

--If we are clear about our theology the people are waiting to hear from us. Maybe that is our biggest challenge. We don't have a message that says what we believe.

-- Maybe more energy is needed to reach out to our actual members. But whatever our membership we can expect about half to come on Sunday.

--We do need and want to grow.

### **Treasurer's Report: Chris Corbett**

Our Proposed Budget:

We reached out to all committees to get input on funding needs.

Dennis, Justin and Chris met several times.

#### Overall outlook: Fiscal year July 1-June 30, 2017

How we're doing this year:

--Current year is very tight, \$27,000 behind where we were last year.

--Our Canvass was fabulous, best in years; about an 11% increase. We are projecting \$462,754, largest one year increase in many years. That's very good. Jerry Fried and his team did a great job.

--Attendance has been good, collection plate intake is good.

--But many other income sources are down and we have a tremendous number of financial burdens: maintenance (the roof), ministerial transition costs that have to be budgeted for, increases in benefits to employees that we can't control, general flatness or downturn in the stock market, which affects our funds.

--In the past we've used a lot of one-time funding from our savings. We're trying to get away from that. We reduced it by \$11,000 this year and hope to do better next year. (Justin made the point that one-time funding of staff positions, in particular, is a bad idea as it obscures the true cost of the ministry.)

--Fundraising was down (mainly the Auction), short term rentals have not been doing well. RE fees are unchanged.

--So net is we have \$23,449 more than last year. We can increase our budget 3.5% instead of 11%.

--We had \$21,000 surplus this time last; we're down to \$10,000 this year.

Key points about expenses for next year:

--\$16,000 budgeted for Senior Minister Search. We think this is a solid number.

- \$18,610 unavoidable expenses in employee benefits: insurance, pension, etc.
- Last year we paid our senior minister for one less month but that won't be the case this year.
- Cut one time funding from \$21,000 to \$9,874.
- Charlie was due for a sabbatical as he left so we still have that money, which we will use that to pay into the Leadership Leaves program.
- We considered but decided not to cut employees so we will take money out of our reserve fund. Which is why we cannot be down to 0 for clean income for the future. We were able to produce \$4,500 for increased facilities maintenance through contributions. But we have no money for raises for employees.
- Our key expenses are employees and benefits, and there is nowhere else to cut.

This is an austere budget. In terms of projects and committees who requested increases:

- Social justice programming increase unfulfilled
- Green sanctuary increase unfulfilled
- Increase to Assistant Music Director's hours unfulfilled
- UULMNJ increase (up to \$1,800) unfulfilled
- Archive request fulfilled (was about \$150 to protect our fragile archives)

This is all a proposal. It's assumed we can make modifications.

Points about fundraising:

Previous auction was Charlie's last year and raised an extra \$8,000. This past year was closer to what has been typical. There were fewer parties.

We need a fundraising committee.

We're trying to get rid of fundraising for individual causes (like the three year's of Music Committee-led fundraisers).

This budget is what we're supposed to be doing. Try to kick up our pledge drive, have it pretty constant with a slow movement upward. Try to get away from the small fundraisers with more emphasis on the pledge drive.

Questions about unfulfilled requests:

- How much of our budget should be going to program? (Currently 3% does but should be more.)

--Francesca Elm's request for social justice programming funding goes to the heart of what do we want to do and how do we want to do it.

--We did not achieve any money toward fair compensation. Our proposed new personnel committee next year will have to work on that.

Decision made to go into executive session.

Dennis is invited to stay as are the ministers.

**Motion to go into executive session 9:18pm**

Moved/seconded/passed

**Motion to come out of executive session /**

Dottie moved / Denise seconded / passed

**9:50pm**

**Motion to adapt the budget as presented / seconded / passed**

Brief discussion about how those who requested money and aren't getting it will be told. Chris will contact them individually.

**Move to adjourn / seconded / approved**

**Adjourned 10:00pm.**